

and local government officials and private organizations to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this sixth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eighteenth.

William J. Clinton

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Remarks on Arrival in Topeka, Kansas

April 7, 1994

Thank you, Governor Finney, for your friendship, your leadership, and your kind remarks, and for your belief that every American and every Kansan ought to have health care that can never be taken away. Thank you, Congressman Slattery, for your long personal friendship and your support and for being such a strong voice in the Congress not only for fiscal responsibility but for basic sanity in our national policies.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm glad to be back in Kansas. I want to thank Major General Rueger for welcoming me, and Colonel Dewayne Ellinson. I want to thank the people who helped to put this event together today, the carpenters local, the floorlayers local. I want to thank the Topeka High School Band over there and the cheerleaders and all those who are cheering. The people who are here from Pauline South Elementary School, thank you for coming. I want to thank the members of the National Guard and the police officers and others who made this day possible. I also want to acknowledge in the audience today the presence of the first American woman to be the Treasurer of the United States, Georgia Neese Gray. How are you, ma'am? God bless you for being here. I want to thank your Lieutenant Governor, your attorney general, your State treasurer, your local mayor, and the chairman of the Democratic Party for meeting me here at the

airport. But mostly I just want to tell you it's nice to be back in Kansas.

You know, since Jim was kind enough to mention the basketball game, you all know that for most of my public life I didn't live in Washington, DC. I was the Governor of one of your neighboring States. I lived and worked in an atmosphere very much like the way you all live and work. And I didn't understand what I often saw in Washington, where every position was pushed to its logical extreme, whether left or right, where it seemed that every debate took on more rhetoric than reality and shed more heat than light, where people seemed to be debating whether the Government could do everything or the Government had to do nothing, where people were either told they were on their own or not challenged to assume any responsibility for their own future.

I ran for President because that didn't make much sense to me, because I thought we ought to come together as a people, we ought to bridge the lines that are dividing us, and we ought to move to the 21st century together, recognizing that Government cannot solve all the problems but that we have a Government to discharge those responsibilities which have to be done by all of us together through our elected officials. I believed then and I believe even more strongly today that instead of paralyzing extremism, what this country needs is moderate, aggressive progressivism of people who are dedicated to getting together and getting things done. Cut down on the rhetoric, turn up the action, put people first, and move the country forward.

Now, there has been a lot of rhetoric about the deficit and how terrible it was, but it tripled in the last 3 years. Instead of that, we have adopted an aggressive economic program designed to reduce the deficit, hold down interest rates, increase investment, and get growth back into this economy. In the past 14 months, the American economy has produced 2.5 million private sector jobs, twice as many as were produced in the previous 4 years. That's the kind of action I went to Washington to take.

I have asked the United States Congress to pass a new budget that cuts spending in 300 different areas, eliminates 100 different

Government programs, still invests more in education, in high-technology jobs, in defense transitions to help the people who won the cold war to win in the face of defense cutbacks, in health research and the things that will help us to win in the 21st century. And if it is adopted, it will mark the first time since 1969 that the President has proposed and the Congress has adopted an actual decrease in domestic spending, exclusive of health care and Social Security, and it will mark the first time since Harry Truman was President of the United States that we reduced the Government's deficit 3 years in a row. That's action, not rhetoric.

We also have many challenges to face. The United States Congress has already done some things in the area of education and training which will be important for the future of Kansas, and more are on the way. Last year we reformed the college loan program so that more young people could borrow the money to go to college at lower interest rates and pay the money back on better terms, and so that tens of thousands of our young people could work in their communities solving problems at the grassroots level in the national service program and earn money to invest in a college education or further education and training. That will move our country forward.

Just a couple of days ago I signed out in California a bill called Goals 2000, which for the first time in the history of America will write into our laws world class education standards for all our schools and all our students and support grassroots reform, not Government mandates but grassroots reform in every community in America to meet those world class standards.

Soon the Congress will pass a bill we call school-to-work, for all the young people in Kansas and throughout the country who know they need more training after high school but don't want to go to 4-year colleges. We know from the census data that every one of our young people needs to finish high school and should get at least 2 years more of some sort of training if they want to get a good job with a growing income. We don't have a system to move people from school to work, but at the end of 4 years, if this bill passes and I get to sign it, we will.

Moving our people to the 21st century by making sure that they can change jobs, learn new skills, and always be able to compete and win, this is the kind of thing that I wanted to be President to do. It's a real thing, not a rhetorical thing, that will change the lives of the American people.

And finally in this area, I have asked the United States Congress to completely change the unemployment system. You know and I know that even in the months when we create a lot of jobs in America, a lot of jobs go away. All over America today, small businesses are creating jobs; big businesses are still downsizing. We know that the average 18-year-old—you look at those young people out there from this high school—the average one of these young people will change work eight times in a lifetime. We do not need to have an unemployment system that says you can live on unemployment payments for several months, and then your unemployment will run out and you still won't have a job. That's what's happening today. Most people do not get called back to their old job. We need a reemployment system so that the first day people are unemployed they immediately begin to train for, look for, and have help in finding a new job to build a new American economy. And we are going to do that this year in Washington.

We're also trying to make your Government more responsive to you. The House of Representatives has before it historic legislation limiting the influence of lobbyists in Washington, increasing the influence of ordinary citizens. And I urge them to pass the lobby reform legislation soon when they come back.

In addition to that, this Congress adopted last year an economic plan which, as you will find out on April 15th, raised the income taxes of the top 1.2 percent of the American people and devoted 100 percent of that money to deficit reduction—every last red cent—and lowered the income taxes of one-sixth of the American people who are working 40 hours a week, who have children in the home, who are hovering just above the poverty line. We don't want them to go into welfare. We want them to stay in the work force. So we say, lower the taxes of the people who are working hard and playing by the

rules, reward work over welfare, and make it possible for people to be successful workers and successful parents. And we did that for one-sixth of the American taxpaying families. And I am proud of that.

I do want to thank Governor Finney for what she said about the response of our administration during the flood. We did everything we could to try to help people all over this country, but especially here, who were devastated by that flood. During the flood, when the Missouri River inundated the town of Elwood about 100 miles from here, FEMA responded with disaster relief, and the Corps of Engineers already today is guarding Elwood against the flooding in the future by helping to rebuild the levee.

It's just one town, but there are hundreds of towns like that. Every time we had a disaster we had tried to say to the American people, "This is about people. This is not about ideology. It's not about political party. It's about delivering the goods." What I want is to see the Government work all day every day the way we work when we've got a disaster. Why should we wait for a disaster to do the right thing? We ought to get together and do the right thing all day every day to move this country forward.

That brings me to the last two things I want to say to you today. The first business Congress will face when it comes back is action on the crime bill. I think all of you know that over the last 20 years we've had a big increase in violent crime and that even though many of our major cities are beginning to see small declines in the overall crime rate, we still have a higher rate of violent crime than any other major nation. We already have by far the highest percentage of our people in prison of any major nation. And still there seems to be no end in sight.

Some people say the answer is tougher punishment. Other people say the answer is to reach these young people before they get in trouble and try to give them a better life. I say both are right, and we must do both. We have to be tough, but we have to be smart.

I started out my career in public life as an attorney general almost 20 years ago, and I thought crime was bad then. But I never dreamed that I would live to see the time

when children would actually stay home from school, over 150,000 every day, because they were afraid to walk to school or afraid to sit in a classroom or afraid to walk in a hall. I never dreamed I would see towns, even towns in my home State of Arkansas, where gang initiations would require people to go in and pull robberies with guns that could turn into murders. I never dreamed I would see young people better armed than police officers with semiautomatic weapons shooting people at random. I never dreamed I would see that. And I tell you, we have got to do something about it.

Our crime bill will do the following things: Number one, it will put 100,000 more police officers on the street, working the streets, working the neighborhoods, knowing the people who live there, in community policing. And it will lower the crime rate. If there are those of you here who don't believe that you can do it, let me say all you have to do is look at the examples all over America. In the city of Houston, Texas, which had one of the highest crime rates, one of the highest murder rates in the entire country, when the mayor got elected and put 660 more police officers on the street and they started working with the communities, the crime rate went down 22 percent in 15 months. The murder rate went down 25 percent. And the mayor got reelected with 91 percent. And I think the two things were connected. We can do better. We need more police officers on the street helping to make our young people and our families safer.

The bill also toughens sentences for a lot of crimes and says if you commit three crimes which cause violence or are reasonably likely to cause serious violence, you are not eligible for parole. A small percentage of criminals do a large percentage of the violent harm in this country. We should identify them and isolate them. And that is very important.

Finally, the bill provides funds to give drug treatment to young people, to have community recreation for young people, to provide young people a place to go after school or before school, to give communities the means to deal with all these kids that are coming from broken families in difficult neighborhoods and troubled circumstances to keep these things from happening in the

first place. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. My mother told me that when I was 6 years old. And it's a whole lot more true today than it was 40 years ago. We are trying to give you an ounce of prevention, and I hope you in Kansas will take full advantage of it when the crime bill passes.

Now, the last thing I want to say is when we leave here, Congressman Slattery's going to take me over to a forum. We're going to hear from a bunch of small business people and talk about whether we can provide health security for all Americans.

Let me just tell you what the stakes are. We are the only country in the world with an advanced economy that doesn't provide health care security to all its citizens. All of our competitors have figured out how to do it. We are spending 40 to 50 percent more of our income on health care than any of our competitors. We are spending about \$90 billion a year—and that's real money everywhere, folks—on paperwork and rules and regulation because of the way we organize the financing of health care that nobody else does.

On any given week in America 58 million Americans have no health insurance; 81 million Americans live in families where somebody has a preexisting condition, a child with diabetes, a father who's had a heart attack, a mother who's had cancer. They either can't get health insurance, or they pay more than they can afford, or they can never change the job they're in because their new employer will not insure them. Three-quarters of the American people have lifetime limits on their insurance policy so that, God forbid, if they should have one child with a terrible illness that drags on for 10 or 15 years, they could lose all their insurance at the time they most need it. That is the reality of the world in which we live. No other nation permits this to happen, only the United States.

The result of all this is, small business is paying 35 percent more for health insurance than big business and government today. Every day more and more people lose their health insurance; about 100,000 a month lose it forever. The Government, as Congressman Slattery will tell you, is cutting defense spending, cutting domestic spending, cutting everything, but health care costs are still

going up at 2 to 3 times the rate of inflation so that we can pay more for the same health care. This system is not working.

We have the best doctors, the best nurses, the best health care providers, the best medical research, the best technology in the world, and the worst system of financing health care. And we have to do something about it.

Now, those who like the system the way they have it now say that I want to give this country some sort of Government program of health care. I don't. You have one, though. It's Medicare, the Government program for older people. And most older people feel pretty secure with it. But I don't propose to do that. What I want to do is to extend the system we have now, guaranteed private health insurance for all Americans, and to extend the choices we have now, give every American family at least three choices every year of doctors and health care plans.

I want to protect people from unfair insurance practices just as Governor Finney is trying to do here. I don't think people should pay more because they are older or pay an unreasonable amount because somebody in their family has been sick. I don't think people should be able to be cut off of health insurance.

I want to have these benefits guaranteed at work. Why? Because 80 percent of the people who are uninsured are in working families. And 90 percent of the health insurance in America today is covered at work where the employer and the employee share the costs.

Can we do it without bankrupting small business? Of course we can. You have to give discounts to really small businesses that operate on limited profit margins. Of course we can. Can we do it and be fair? If everybody does it so no competitor has an advantage, yes, we can.

Will we continue to be the only country in the world that shovels more of our health care dollars into paperwork and less into health care? Will we continue to be the only advanced country that has another 100,000 Americans a month lose their health insurance? Will we continue to discriminate against small business people and self-employed people and let them pay 35 to 40 per-

cent more? Will we continue to have a situation where rural folks don't have access to doctors? I don't think so.

I believe we can do better. I think you think we can do better. And if we cool the rhetoric and talk about the facts and have practical and compassionate approaches to this, we will solve this problem. I'm here in Kansas to try to do it today.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:35 p.m. at the Kansas Air National Guard ramp. In his remarks, he referred to Maj. Gen. James F. Rueger, Adjutant General of Kansas; Col. Dewayne Ellinson, Commander, 190th Air Refueling Group, Kansas Air National Guard; Kansas Attorney General Robert T. Stephen; State Treasurer Sally Thompson; Mayor Henry Felker of Topeka; and Dennis M. Langley, Kansas Democratic Party chairman. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in a Health Care Roundtable in Topeka

April 7, 1994

The President. First, thank you, Congressman Slattery, for hosting us. Congressman Glickman, thank you for coming. Governor Finney, it's always good to be with you. I see former Governor Carlin out there; thank you for coming. Most of all, thank you to the small business people who are here on this panel.

I'd like to spend most of my time listening to these folks talk here and dealing with how their specific circumstances would be affected by health care reform, if we can pass it. But let me try to set the stage, if I might, for how we came to this place and how I came to spend the amount of time that I have, that my wife has, that our administration has, working on this health care issue.

Before I became President, as I think all of you know, I was the Governor of your neighboring State of Arkansas for a dozen years. I grew up in a family with a mother who was a nurse anesthetist. I grew up hanging around hospitals, talking to doctors and nurses all my life, having a passionate interest in health care from the point of health care providers. As a Governor, I was forced to deal with the problem of health care from

the point of view of people who are paying for it.

First of all, in State Government, we had huge burdens under the Medicaid program, which is a shared program for paying for health care for poor people paid for by the Federal and the State Government. And secondly, my job was to try to increase the economic base of my State, both small and large businesses. And I watched medical inflation driving up medical costs rapidly.

I spent in 1990 an enormous amount of time as a Governor, long before I ever dreamed I'd run for President, talking to literally almost 1,000 health care providers personally in my State and hundreds of business people about the problems in the health care system and what could be done about it. Without going into a great deal of detail, let me say I reached the conclusion that we could not solve this problem as long as we continued to be the only advanced economy in the entire world that could not figure out how to provide basic health care coverage to all of our citizens. Every country with which we compete has figured this out, and we haven't.

Now, we have the best doctors, the best nurses, the best health care providers, the best medical research, the best medical technology in the world. We also have, by far, the most bureaucratic and administratively costly health care system in the world. There's more paperwork in our system today, and it costs more to administer this system, by far, than any other system in the world. We also discriminate against small business people, farmers, and self-employed people in the provision of health insurance; they tend to pay more.

We discriminate also against people based on their age or whether anybody in their family has ever been sick or not. We also, in a funny way—Jim Slattery alluded to this—we actually discourage people from leaving welfare for minimum-wage jobs because if you stay on welfare, you're covered by Medicaid, the Government program for poor people. If you take a minimum-wage job without health insurance, you're going to lower your income and put your children at risk because you lose your health insurance by going to work. Instead, you start paying taxes to pay